Norwegian adolescents must make an important career choice at 15: going for vocational training or further academic education. The education system provides vocational and educational guidance, but the concept of career guidance in school is new. However, the available literature and research on educational and vocational choice in Norway have largely focused on the sociological aspects of choosing, and everyday speech has often defined a career actor as striving for success. This is not how career is conceptualized in career theory today, so there is a discrepancy between public and theoretical understanding. Transferring theories between contexts have some problems, and there is a need for a deeper understanding of Norwegian context and how it might relate to the career concept.

The research question is: “How do Norwegian adolescents experience making a career choice in 10th grade”?

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Literature analysis suggest that Norwegian work-culture emphasizes collectivistic values as well as individualistic values, making the career project a continuous transaction between the needs of the individual and the needs of the community. This manifest itself differently in urban and rural contexts, as findings from the data suggest that the experience of making career choices (and giving career choice support) is affected by a different balance between individual and community needs, and differing perceptions of opportunity structure. The career counselling process is influenced by this balance.

IMPLICATIONS

The national career learning curriculum and guidance policies are affected because we need to use the career term consciously and reflexively. While guidelines are nationally uniform, they sometimes seem arbitrary and strange in specific contexts.

METODOLOGY

The study applies qualitative methodology and explores the research question through semi-structured interviews with 10th graders and their career counsellor/teacher in a variety of locations, with a total of 26 interviews. Sampling was done purposively, conveniently and theoretically (GT) to capture the geographical and demographical variety in Norway. Time frame for the project is January 2016 – November 2019.

THESIS BY PUBLICATION:

ARTICLE 1
“Norwegian career competence - career management skills with cultural baggage” Chapter, single writer. A literature analysis focusing on the development of the Norwegian work-culture, and how cultural values and the concept of career seems to conflict. Central concepts in the article are career as an individualistic project, and the term collectivistic individualism that some researchers argue is a central cultural value in Norway. In review, to be published in January 2018.

ARTICLE 2
“...I’ve been talking about this all the time: if you get the chance, come home! I’ll be old someday, and then I’d like someone to be here and take care of me.” A case study of career counselling in two rural Norwegian communities.” Journal article, co-writing with main supervisor. A case-study where community thinking is a central aspect of counsellors’ guidance and counselling. In progress.

SUPERVISORS

Main supervisor Tristram Hooley, Professor of Career Education, and second supervisor Mårten Kae Paulsen, Associate professor.

REFERENCES


